

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, and VSBA
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary of Education
SUBJECT: SU-Wide Curriculum and the Provision of Special Education Services
DATE: February 17, 2015

I am writing to remind you of some of the recent changes that have taken effect in state law with regard to (i) curriculum and (ii) the provision of special education services.

I. SU Wide Curriculum

Under Act 153 it is now a duty of each supervisory union board to "establish a supervisory union-wide curriculum, by either developing the curriculum or assisting the member districts to develop it jointly, and ensure implementation of the curriculum." Furthermore the curriculum must meet the requirements established by the administrative rules of the State Board of Education in the "Education Quality Standards" (EQS) Rule 2000 series (of the State Board's rules).

By now, SU boards should be moving on this important policy decision. Any policy choices around an SU-wide curriculum must be made with an eye toward alignment with our Education Quality Standards. It is our understanding that teacher involvement in development or selection of curriculum is essential, just as opportunities for professional collaboration and learning around how to support the EQS are critical to effective implementation and local ownership of curriculum decisions.

The AOE will continue to work closely with your systems, through your curriculum coordinators and the PLN, to support this implementation. Please contact Tom Alderman at 802-479-1265 or via email at Tom.Alderman@state.vt.us if you have any questions about the interplay between SU-wide curriculum and EQS.

II. Special Education Services

Under Act 153, except for paraeducators, Supervisory Unions are required to employ all special education staff and pay for the provision of special education services, among all component districts. The intent of this legislation was to ensure systems efficiencies

and to allow for sharing of specialized expertise across more sites. In addition, Supervisory Union Boards and Superintendents should be working with district boards to ensure any/all special education related budget line items are accounted for in the SU's budget (not in district budgets; unless the district is a SD). In recent weeks, we have received several inquiries about payment for special education services, as local budgets are being prepared. We hope this reminder is helpful. If an SU Board believes that payment for (and the provision of) a particular special education related budget item should remain at the district level for reasons of both effectiveness and efficiency, then a waiver request from these requirements can be directed to me, care of Vaughn Altemus. Vaughn can be reached at 802-479-1744 or via email at Vaughn.Altemus@state.vt.us .

Again, please contact my office with any questions or concerns.